

Did You Know...

Did you know that the Adirondack Park covers 6 million acres, about 1/5 of New York State, and is bigger than Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Great Smokey Mountain and Glacier National Parks combined?

It is a land of mountains and hills and vast plains with 43 mountains over 4,000 feet tall including Mount Marcy, New York's highest peak at 5,344 feet. Some mountains have rare alpine summit environments devoid of trees with unique plants that typically grow in the far northern tundra and are actually holdovers from the last Ice Age.

It is a land of over 2,800 lakes and ponds and over 30,000 miles of rivers and streams. The mighty Hudson River starts high in the Adirondacks where you can actually straddle the infant river while climbing Gray Peak.

It is a land of millions of forested acres with, by one estimate, conservatively, 1 billion trees and perhaps 500,000 acres of old growth forest in which there is absolutely no sign of human impact. It is a land of remoteness and wilderness, indeed Mount Marcy wasn't even "discovered" until 1837 at which time Mount Washington in New Hampshire, the tallest mountain in the northeastern US which was first climbed in the early 1600's, already had buildings on its summit.

It is a land of deer, bear, beaver, coyote, otter, fox and the mighty moose which has recently moved back into the region. It is the home of numerous bird species including the loon, a bird with an unforgettable call that can swim long distances under water. It is truly a showcase of the glories of nature!

The Adirondack Park is the largest publically protected natural area in the contiguous United States. Its state owned land is perhaps the best protected land in the entire country and is actually protected in the New York State Constitution in the famous "forever wild" clause with its stirring words that the state owned land in the Park "Shall be forever kept as wild forest lands".

There are miles and miles of hiking trails and paddling streams and lakes and ponds. The Adirondacks are a unique blend of private and public land, permanent residents and visitors, local and state government and unique, fragile natural environments. The land and the human story of the Adirondacks are equally compelling and amazing...Come, join us, the Binghamton Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, as we explore this wondrous region.

By Pat Connors
Program Chair, Binghamton ADK